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Chairman: Mr. Carl (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Austria)

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In the absence of Mr. Swe (Myanmar), Mr. Carl (Austria), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Agenda item 74: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (*continued*) (A/59/20)

1. **Mr. Hodgkins** (United States of America), noting the contribution made by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) to promoting international space cooperation, said that the flexible approach that used multi-year work plans, action teams and reports by other groups on their activities had proved to be an effective means of implementing the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) and allowed for work on a wide range of topics.

2. The United States of America was pleased with the progress made by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee in preparing the report to the General Assembly on activities related to implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III and the successful work of the Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space in identifying potential implementation options for establishing an international framework for the safety of planned space nuclear power source applications. Progress had also been made by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on space-system-based telemedicine.

3. International cooperation in solar-terrestrial physics was vitally important. As the effects of solar activities and space weather phenomena on the daily lives of people, the environment and space systems were becoming more apparent, collaboration was needed to reach a better understanding of those consequences. In that regard, the United States of America noted with satisfaction that the Subcommittee had agreed to consider the item again at its 2005 session and examine the issue of how it might support and enhance the coordination and planning for the International Geophysical and Heliophysical Year that would be marked in 2007.

4. His delegation regretted that the Subcommittee had been unable to reach consensus during the current year on the Inter-Agency Debris Coordination Committee (IADC) space debris mitigation guidelines. His Government continued to believe that the fastest way to limit the growth of orbital debris would be for space-faring countries to implement the measures specified in that Committee's space debris mitigation guidelines.

5. Progress had also been made within the Legal Subcommittee on a range of topics. In particular, the Subcommittee had considered developments relating to a possible protocol on matters specific to space assets to the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment of the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law. His Government believed that such a protocol would facilitate the provision of commercial financing for space activities.

6. Significant progress had also been made on the question of registering space objects and on such issues as the spin-off benefits of space exploration, strengthening the role of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in efforts to promote international cooperation in the use of outer space for peaceful purposes, and space and society, with special emphasis on education.

7. **Mr. López** (Cuba) said that outer space exploration was playing a growing role in various aspects of the life of society. At present, it would be very difficult to do without the use of remote sensing and telecommunications in the areas of agriculture, education, environmental protection, natural resource management and navigation systems. Nor was it possible to forgo the microgravity experiments, which were allowing such fields as biology and fluid physics to be explored in ways not possible on Earth and constituted an important component of scientific development. The fascination with outer space had set free the imagination of millions of people and stimulated the growth of unlimited creative potential for developing new technologies. Meteorological satellite observations had helped to improve weather forecasts and to mitigate, through concerted actions, the harmful effects of natural disasters such as hurricanes. At its previous session, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had highlighted the importance of facilitating access by developing countries to satellite data at reasonable prices and using such means of communication as the Internet in the event of natural disasters.

8. Cuba reiterated that outer space must be seen as the common heritage of humanity, to be defended on the basis of three main principles that must regulate

States' activities with respect to its exploration and use. The first was the need to preserve outer space exclusively for peaceful uses, while enhancing international cooperation and promoting real sustainable economic development, including the necessary transfer of advanced space technology from the developed to the developing countries, and taking into consideration the continued gap between them in space science and technology. Cuba rejected attempts to revise the principles relating to the use of nuclear energy in outer space which did not take into consideration the interests of all States and of developing countries in particular. It was also essential to reach agreements on space debris mitigation.

9. Secondly, Cuba emphatically opposed the plans to unleash an arms race in outer space, which would seriously jeopardize collective security. The issue was becoming particularly urgent with the emergence of new military doctrines that advocated the development and deployment of new and expensive destructive weapons systems aimed at strengthening the hegemony of the most powerful over the remaining inhabitants of the planet. In that regard, his delegation was deeply concerned that some nuclear Power that also had space potential continued to block the negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament aimed at establishing international machinery for the prevention of an arms race in outer space. To that end, as a first practical step, States should establish a moratorium on deploying weapons in outer space until an agreement on the matter had been reached by the international community.

10. Thirdly, Cuba shared the view that the existing legal regime applicable to outer space was not enough to ensure the prevention of an arms race in outer space, which meant that there was an urgent need to devise new legal mechanisms for control and verification.

11. His delegation favoured the strengthening of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its two subcommittees. The interest shown by various States in working with and joining the Committee was welcome. His delegation emphasized the importance that it attached to developing strategies to minimize the consequences of the creation of space debris and the need to pay careful attention to the question of collisions of space objects, especially objects with nuclear power sources on board, as well as defining the responsibilities of the parties concerned.

12. Many of the items on the COPUOS agenda were of common interest, such as the geostationary orbit and its utilization and application in space communications, taking particular account of the needs and interests of developing countries. Lowering the costs of small satellites and microsatellites used for agriculture and health care was very important for developing countries. Solar-terrestrial physics research should continue for the benefit of the development of humanity.

13. In conclusion, in view of the great importance of strengthening international and regional cooperation to develop space research, his delegation said that such cooperation must not become the exclusive domain or purview of a small group of developed countries. The United Nations and the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had much work to do to in order to make optimal use of space technologies to promote human development, strengthen environmental protection and ensure real sustainable development in a climate of peace and prosperity for all of humanity. Cuba stood ready to do all that it could to cooperate in attaining that objective.

14. Mr. Kuzmenkov (Russian Federation) called for a more active discussion on the theme "Ways and Means of Maintaining Outer Space for Peaceful Purposes" in the Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and said that the deployment of weapons in outer space seriously damaged the existing regime for the peaceful use of outer space, as well as the whole system of international security.

15. The Russian Federation believed that the codification and the progressive development of the current rules of space law were long overdue and becoming increasingly relevant given mankind's rapid development of outer space for commercial, scientific and other peaceful purposes. Attention was again called to the proposal on the drafting of a comprehensive United Nations convention on international space law. While drafting that instrument, generally acceptable outcomes could be found for such long-standing issues as the delimitation and definition of outer space, monitoring of man-made space debris and protection of intellectual property.

16. The Russian Federation intended to take an active part in the review of the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III. In the opinion of the Russian delegation, the

Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, with the help of ad hoc informal working groups, had done important work to implement the decisions of the Conference. That was reflected in particular by its adoption of the Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development, although much still remained to be done on many priority issues.

17. The Russian Federation highly appreciated the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on the topic of the use of nuclear power sources in outer space and the problem of space debris, and welcomed the space debris mitigation guidelines prepared by the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee. At the same time, the Russian Federation underscored the need to thoroughly take into account all the observations of States pertaining to that document. The problem of preventing man-made space debris required the solution of a broad spectrum of problems with the involvement of all concerned States. In the future the need might arise to introduce changes and clarifications in the guidelines in view of the technological complexity of this problem.

18. Progress had been made in defining the criteria and security conditions for the use of nuclear energy sources. In defining the scope of subsequent work in that area, it would be necessary to use the potential and experience of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and, in particular, to include Agency experts in the activities of the COPUOS Working Group.

19. For the purpose of environmental monitoring and providing early warning and mitigating the effects of disasters, it was necessary to develop remote sensing of the Earth from outer space and to broaden cooperation with other interested international organizations. One of the results of such cooperation could be the creation of a global disaster management system using space technology.

20. The renewed dialogue on that and many other issues pertaining to space activities was a testimony to the intense development of international cooperation regarding outer space, reflecting the interests of all States Members of the United Nations.

21. **Mr. Nguyen Van Bao** (Viet Nam), thanked the Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space for introducing the comprehensive report on the work of its forty-seventh session. Viet Nam attached great importance to the role of that Committee in promoting international cooperation in the area in question and commended the great progress achieved during the most recent session. Viet Nam also supported the decision of the Committee to recommend to the General Assembly that the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Thailand should become members of the Committee.

22. Since outer space was the common heritage of all mankind, it must be used solely for peaceful purposes. Although significant advances had been made in space technologies and in widening the scope of the peaceful use of outer space, many developing countries had no access to advanced technologies. Viet Nam therefore emphasized the need to assist developing countries wanting to acquire space technology so as to reduce the gap between poor and rich in that area and to use outer space for the benefit and in the interests of all countries.

23. Viet Nam agreed with many delegations on the need to negotiate a legally binding international treaty on the prevention of an arms race in outer space and to prohibit the deployment of weapons in outer space.

24. **Mr. Dabbashi** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) expressed appreciation for the activities of COPUOS and its Subcommittees and for the work done at its forty-seventh session.

25. All countries had come to recognize the great significance of the recent rapid development of space technologies and of their utilization to ensure sustainable development, progress and prosperity. The Center for Remote Sensing and Space Science had been established in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in 1999 and was helping to solve problems created by desertification, water shortages and similar issues. His country was currently considering joining the International Satellite System for Search and Rescue.

26. There was an urgent need for international arrangements that would allow all countries — in return for an acceptable payment — to use the results of space technology development. Such arrangements would permit the sustainable development of the developing countries and reduce the inequality between them and the developed countries. He expressed the hope that in the near future developing States would have their own projects based on space technologies, thus allowing such technologies to be transferred to the most needy of those countries, and that the international community would actively engage in the

drafting of a legally binding international treaty on the use of outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes. His country strongly urged all countries to refrain from any actions that could lead to the militarization of outer space and would thus have serious consequences for all humanity.

27. Having participated for many years as an observer in the work of COPUOS, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya was most pleased and grateful that the Committee had decided to accept it as a member. It was to be hoped that the decision would be unanimously approved by the General Assembly. His delegation would make every effort to implement the mandate of COPUOS and to strengthen international cooperation in the use of outer space for peaceful purposes.

28. **Mrs. Miller** (Jamaica) said that space technology could yield vast benefits for States, in particular those that did not have current ambitions to embark on an active space programme. That was why Jamaica supported the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in promoting international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, since such an approach allowed the international community, both developed and developing countries, to apply the achievements of space science and technology.

29. Jamaica had noted with interest the work being undertaken by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, particularly the activities of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications. The priority areas identified for consideration — namely disaster management, satellite communications for tele-education and telemedicine applications, monitoring and protection of the environment, management of natural resources, and education and capacity-building — had enormous significance for the addressing the key social and economic concerns of developing countries. Activities related to the international satellite system for search and rescue were also of interest.

30. The Caribbean region and parts of the United States had recently suffered the devastating effects of a spate of hurricanes, and Jamaica therefore had a particular interest in the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to implement an integrated, space-based global natural disaster management system. Such a system would help to predict, mitigate and respond to natural disasters. Jamaica would welcome additional information on how such space-related technology in disaster management could be made available to and used effectively by countries in the Caribbean region.

31. She expressed concern regarding the limited financial resources available to the Programme on Space Applications and particular interest in how States that were not members of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space could participate in its activities and its work. Jamaica planned to do so by participating in relevant United Nations conferences, training courses and workshops. Two such events were scheduled to be held in the Latin American and Caribbean region in 2005. They would deal specifically with the application of space technology to natural resources management and environmental monitoring and tele-health and tele-education.

32. **Mr. Gallegos Chiriboga** (Ecuador) noted that the discussion of the question of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space at the present session of the General Assembly was taking place immediately after World Space Week, held every year from 4 to 10 October, and suggested that a tribute should be paid to all the persons and organizations engaged in various countries of the world in space-science research and the development and improvement of the legal framework for regulating activities in outer space so that the benefits of the exploration and use of outer space would help to improve people's quality of life and to ensure the prosperity and well-being of present and future generations. His delegation welcomed in that connection the statement made by the Chairman of COPUOS on 2 June 2004, in which he invited the Committee to identify new areas for the application of space technologies for sustainable development, and inter alia to identify initiatives to ensure the effective use of space capabilities to promote health and education and to strengthen decision-making in the management of natural resources, including water resources, which warranted special attention in the light of General Assembly resolution 58/217 of 23 December 2003 proclaiming the period 2005-2015 as the International Decade of Action "Water for Life".

33. His delegation had already pointed out at the present session that hunger, environmental degradation, water shortages, epidemics and epidemic and infectious diseases were having an adverse impact on the lives of millions of people, and that such

marginalization and the structural imbalance in the international system would worsen still further unless steps were taken to narrow the gulf between rich and poor and offer women and men the possibility of self-development in conditions of sufficiency, dignity and security. That was precisely why Ecuador attached such importance to the provisions of General Assembly resolution 58/89 of 9 December 2003, which called for more effective use of space technology and encouragement of the orderly growth of space activities to promote sustained economic growth and sustainable development in all countries, as well as to mitigate the consequences of natural disasters, in particular in the developing countries. His delegation therefore supported the Committee's recommendation that it should consider at its next session, as a matter of priority, ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes.

34. The countries of North and South America, including Ecuador, attached special importance to outer space and its rational, equitable and peaceful use. That was why the General Assembly had recommended in its resolution 58/89, that COPUOS, within the framework of its examination of ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes, should consider ways to promote regional and interregional cooperation based on experiences stemming from the Space Conference of the Americas. That testified to the respect won by the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean through their serious, profound and forward-looking analysis of the possibilities of using outer space for the development and progressive growth of human well-being.

35. The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean had taken a decision to invest the Space Conference of the Americas with official status, and the members of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States had decided to hold the fifth Space Conference in Ecuador in 2005. That decision had been taken in the light of Ecuador's serious and responsible approach to the use of outer space and in recognition of its contribution to the development of international space law.

36. His delegation agreed with the priority areas for the work of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications and was convinced that the implementation of the planned measures would deliver real benefits for the developing countries. However, the earmarked financial contributions for the Programme must be increased if its activities were to be carried out and its financial viability guaranteed.

37. His delegation endorsed the view of COPUOS on the necessity to build capacity in the use of remote sensing technology to meet the needs of the developing countries and was convinced that the application of such technology and the peaceful uses of outer space could bring enormous benefits to the poorest population groups.

38. It noted in particular the huge achievements of the People's Republic of China in the space field, in particular the launch of its manned SHENZHOU-5 spaceship in October 2003 and of a number satellites. Special attention should be paid in that connection to China's stated readiness to promote the development of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space on a basis of equality and mutual benefit in order to ensure that the achievements of space science and technology could be used by more countries, especially developing countries.

39. All aspects of the question of the geostationary orbit must receive detailed study, in view of the limited nature of the resource.

40. Ecuador agreed with the Committee's recommendation that it should continue to study the possibility of establishing, within the framework of the United Nations, an international organization for the coordination of space activities for disaster management and called on Member States to discuss the question at the forty-second session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction to be held from 18 to 22 January 2005 in Kobe, Japan.

41. In its resolution 58/89 the General Assembly had called for promotion of the exploration and use of outer space, as the province of all mankind, for peaceful purposes and had appealed to Member States to promote the attainment of the goals set out in the resolution for the benefit of present and future generations. Outer space must serve as a source of universal development and a tool for correcting the world's imbalances and inequalities.

42. **Ms. Laohaphan** (Thailand) noted that COPUOS had recommended to the General Assembly that Thailand should become a member of the Committee. Thailand supported the Committee's call for its

members to participate actively in its work and in the work of its subsidiary bodies.

43. As part of the efforts to promote the peaceful uses of outer space Thailand had conducted bilateral projects with a number of countries, including neighbouring countries, and at the regional and international levels it had been working in the ASEAN Committee on Science and Technology. In conjunction with the United Nations it had organized a workshop on the contribution of space communications technology to bridging the digital divide and had joined the ESCAP Regional Space Applications Programme. In November 2004 it was to host with the Office for Outer Space Affairs the 25th Asian Conference on Remote Sensing and the first Asian Space Conference. In addition, a workshop on tele-health and telemedicine was to be held in the Asian-Pacific region in the near future.

44. With reference to paragraph 52 of the COPUOS report, she said that international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space should be more firmly directed towards assisting the developing countries to attain the Millennium Development Goals. For example, tele-education initiatives in remote areas were in line with Development Goal 2; telemedicine, which helped to secure human well-being, supported the attainment of Goals 4, 5 and 6; and remote sensing helped to ensure the sustainable use of the environment — the purpose of Goal 7.

45. Thailand supported the initiative for the implementation, within the framework of the United Nations, of an integrated, space-based global natural disaster management system. The selection of the topic "Space and education" as the focus of the discussion in the period 2004-2005 was a step in the right direction, not least for the popularization of the work of COPUOS.

46. **Mr. Yamamoto** (Japan) noted that Japan's SERVIS-1 satellite had been successfully launched in October 2003. However, Japan had experienced a number of disappointments over the past year as a result of space-technology failures.

47. October 2003 had also seen the establishment of the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, which was charged with the promotion of space activities, with emphasis on such matters as the development of satellites for Earth observation, telecommunications, broadcasting and positioning, the transfer of launch-vehicle operation to the private sector, the development of advanced-type launch vehicles to carry supplier modules to the International Space Station (ISS), the further promotion of space science in Japan, and assistance with the implementation of the ISS programme. In addition, the Agency conducted research in many different areas, from basic scientific experimentation to practical research and development.

48. In September 2004 Japan's Council for Science and Technology Policy had adopted a strategy for space development and utilization, which set out the general policy for the development and use of outer space in the next decade.

49. Japan had also been promoting international cooperation in a variety of fields, particularly Earth observation, the importance of which had been noted at the G8 summit in June 2003 and at the first Earth Observation Summit. The second Earth Observation Summit, in Japan in April 2004, had adopted a draft implementation plan. Japan provided one of the co-chairmen of the ad hoc Group on Earth Observations established at the first Summit.

50. His delegation had had great pleasure in serving as chairman of the Action Team on agenda item 17 and expressed its appreciation to the other Action Teams for the reports which they had compiled.

51. The development of outer space offered infinite possibilities for all mankind. It was essential for the benefits of space activities to be used not just by the countries engaged in such activities but by all mankind. It was to be hoped that Thailand and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, which had become full members of COPUOS, would make a positive contribution to its work.

52. **Mr. Akinyede** (Nigeria) congratulated China on the success of its first manned space mission and noted the remarkable progress made by the United States National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the European Space Agency (ESA) in the exploration of Mars.

53. In September 2003 Nigeria had launched its first satellite into orbit. It had been a momentous event not only for Nigeria but also for Africa as a whole, and had demonstrated that a developing country could develop and use inexpensive, flexible and dynamic remote sensing in agriculture, environmental management and other areas.

54. To evaluate and validate the data received with the help of the satellite, an international workshop had been organized in June 2004 and attended by more than 500 participants. The workshop had addressed a number of issues, including: environmental degradation in the Niger delta; the monitoring of deforestation in Nigeria; mapping/monitoring of aggressive gully erosion and land degradation in south-eastern Nigeria; assessment of the consequences of the construction of dams and the regulation of the flow of surface waters on agriculture and other socio-economic activities in northern Nigeria; water recharge for the depleted upper aquifer of the Chad Basin in Nigeria; and the potentials of the satellite "NigeriaSat-1" for geological mapping and mineral exploration in Benue Trough.

55. Following the launch of the satellite, Nigeria had taken steps to fulfil its obligations under the legal regime governing space-related activities. In October 2003 Nigeria had acceded to the Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects and the Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space. It had earlier signed and ratified the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, and the Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space.

56. As a follow-up to the successful launch of the satellite, Nigeria's National Space Research and Development Agency had received government approval to launch a communications satellite which would meet the Government's aspiration fully to consolidate the gains brought by communications technology. Also, the President of Nigeria had recently approved the building and launching in 2007 of a high-resolution Earth observation satellite which would be one of the proposed African Resource and Environmental Management constellation satellites. That project was being considered as a potential project in the science and technology programme areas of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). That initiative would promote the use of accessible space observation data for tackling the complex challenges of sustainable food production, protection of the environment and disaster management in Africa.

57. Successful research was continuing at the Centre for Basic Space Sciences and the Centre for Geodesy and Geodynamics. In October 2003 the Centre for Basic Space Sciences had signed a memorandum of understanding with the National Astronomical Observatory of Japan. The Centre had also submitted a proposal to Western Kentucky University (United States of America) for the siting of a small telescope in Nigeria to support astronomy and space science research in the country.

58. The African Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education, located in Nigeria, had hosted a workshop on satellite communication in 2004, and in January 2004 had launched its second postgraduate course on satellite communication and remote sensing. The Centre had also begun the study of the energy exchange between the surface of the Earth and the atmosphere in tropical climate conditions. The goal of the study was to investigate the energy balance in a tropical agricultural field in the transition period between dry and wet seasons, using direct measurements of all components of the energy and radiation balance at the surface.

59. Nigeria considered international cooperation to be a strategic condition for rapid implementation of its space policy and programmes. In that connection, he was pleased to announce that Nigeria had become a member of the International Astronomical Union.

60. **Mr. Romeiro** (Brazil), speaking on behalf of the members of the Common Market of the Southern Cone (MERCOSUR), Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, and the associated States Bolivia, Chile and Peru, said that the COPUOS report reflected the importance they attached to the work period under review, showed the importance of issues connected with the use of outer space and pointed to the fact that space technologies had become an integral part of everyday life. It argued for the urgent need to make progress on the legal and ethical questions of the peaceful use of outer space. In order to achieve genuine development and an enhancement of well-being through the peaceful use of outer space, it was necessary to consider space as the common heritage of mankind, to be used rationally, for peaceful purposes and for the common good of present and future generations. Also, in spite of current achievements in the area of space technologies, a significant portion of the human race was still unaware of them and not reaping their benefits. Furthermore, broad strata of the

world's population had no relevant knowledge and understanding of the importance of using space technology for future stages of development.

61. The MERCOSUR and associated countries reiterated their increased interest in the work of COPUOS, had been supporting its activities from the outset and were taking an active part in its deliberations.

62. One of the priority issues for COPUOS was maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes, and in that regard it was essential to continue to implement the recommendations of UNISPACE III and develop the norms of international space law, including international agreements on applications of the achievements of space science and technology for peaceful purposes. He welcomed the recognition of the need to strengthen international cooperation in securing the rational use of water resources, demonstrated by the inclusion in the agenda of the forty-seventh session of COPUOS of an item entitled "Space and water".

63. Another cause for satisfaction was the unreserved support COPUOS had expressed for the activities of the working group established to submit to the General Assembly the report on implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III, in particular concerning improvement in the use of acquired knowledge by ensuring universal access to services in the area of satellite communications and innovative sources of financing and preparation for implementing experimental projects in accordance with the proposals of the various action teams.

64. The progress made in the work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee was also most interesting. In the context of implementing the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, particular attention was being given to specific areas that were of priority importance for developing countries and geared mainly to enhancing the potential of and raising the level of information available to decision-making organs in order to secure support on the ground for specific methods of using space technologies. That was particularly topical in view of the serious consequences recently suffered by the countries of the Caribbean Basin as a result of devastating hurricanes.

65. The MERCOSUR and associated countries noted with interest and satisfaction the priority areas that had been selected for the Programme, in particular satellite communications for tele-education and telemedicine applications; monitoring and protection of the environment; management of natural resources; use of global navigation and positioning satellite systems; spin-off of space technology; and promoting the participation of private industry in the activities of the Programme.

66. As for the work of the Legal Subcommittee at its forty-third session, it was necessary to underline the special importance of existing space treaties for all countries; the work of the Subcommittee in examining the activities of international organizations relating to space law was also of great significance.

67. It was necessary to build on the progress made in establishing regional mechanisms for cooperation. The most important outcome of the Fourth Space Conference of the Americas, held in Cartagena in 2002, had been the creation of a regional body for cooperation on outer space issues, which was regarded by the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean as an indispensable mechanism for successful activity in that area. The Fifth Space Conference of the Americas was to be held in Quito, Ecuador.

68. It was impossible to overstate the importance of the appropriate use of outer space in the interests of the progress of all mankind, without distinctions between developed and developing countries and on the basis of peaceful cooperation within the community of nations.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.